



**The British  
Psychological Society**

Division of Forensic Psychology

Northern Ireland

**Forensic Symposium**

**Monday 23 May 2016 at 5.45pm**

**Room OG 533, Ground Floor, Keir Building, Queen's University Belfast**

**PROGRAMME**

- 5.45PM: Arrival (Tea, Coffee, Sandwiches)**
- 6.15pm: Patterns of Offending Behaviour: A Sequence Analysis Approach**  
Dr David Keatley, University of Lincoln
- 6.35pm: Patterns of PTSD treatment response in a sample of Danish survivors of Childhood sexual abuse**  
Ms Shelley Fletcher, Ulster University
- 6.55pm: Examining Distress Tolerance as a Mediator of the Relationship between Childhood Maltreatment and Adult Psychopathology**  
Mr Martin Robinson, Ulster University
- 7.15pm: A Day in the Life....."Forensic psychological practice in secure settings: a view from the inside."**  
Dr Clare Byrne, Department of Justice

**This event is generously supported by The School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast**

## **Abstracts**

### **Patterns of Offending Behaviour: A Sequence Analysis Approach**

Presenter: Dr David Keatley, University of Lincoln

**Objectives:** The main aim of this paper is to understand the pattern of actions involved in offending behaviours, in general. A particular case will be provided: A sequence analysis to describe the timeline of events between individuals deciding to consume alcohol, and then drive a vehicle.

**Design:** The study used a sequence analysis design, in which a series of actions related to drinking alcohol and driving were presented and individuals' patterns of behaviours investigated.

**Method:** The method involves taking a series of recorded interviews into driving whilst under the influence of alcohol. The current sample of interviews (N=60) were transcribed and analysed until a mutually exclusive and exhaustive list of behaviours was agreed upon. Frequently occurring behaviours were then analysed for significant transitions.

**Results:** Results showed clear patterns of actions in individuals' choices to consume alcohol and drive a vehicle. A lag one sequential analysis approach was used (i.e., a-b, b-c, c-d). This analysis involves transitions between only the one preceding behaviour (antecedent), to give a chain of events. Transition maps showing the sequence of events were developed to clearly show the patterns of behaviours that lead to driving under the influence of alcohol.

**Conclusions:** The present research highlights the sequences of actions and choices leading up to driving under the influence. The method has implications, which will be discussed, for policy and policing, as well as other related driving offences (i.e., drugs etc.). Limitations related to analysis are discussed and guidance provided. Relation to other areas of Forensic Psychology (i.e., rape cases, violence) will also be outlined.

### **Patterns of PTSD treatment response in a sample of Danish survivors of Childhood sexual abuse**

Presenter: Shelley Fletcher, Ulster University

Research has demonstrated that there is a strong link between Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and the development of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Studies examining the effectiveness of treatments for PTSD have generally examined changes in group means over time. This however does not take varying treatment responses into account. The aim of this study was to examine changes in PTSD over time and investigate whether there are multiple trajectories of PTSD treatment response. Using a sample of treatment seeking CSA survivors ( $n=439$ ) we employed latent class growth analysis (LGCA) to test for multiple trajectories. The results revealed four distinct trajectories which we labelled; high PTSD moderate responder, high PTSD treatment resistant, moderate PTSD rapid responder, and moderate PTSD gradual responder. The treatment response of PTSD in CSA survivors is characterised by distinct patterns with varying levels and rates of symptom improvement. Understanding these distinct patterns has important implications for treatment planning.

## **Examining Distress Tolerance as a Mediator of the Relationship between Childhood Maltreatment and Adult Psychopathology**

Presenter: Martin Robinson, Ulster University

**Abstract:** A wealth of empirical literature has documented that experience of maltreatment in childhood is related to an increased risk for the development of psychopathologies in adulthood. The emerging literature concerning Distress Tolerance suggests that this could possibly act as explanatory factor within this relationship however this is yet to be empirically examined. The current study examined the relationship between childhood maltreatment and PTSD, depression, anxiety and alcohol use as well as the possible mediating role of Distress Tolerance in a university student population ( $N = 762$ ). A series of binary logistic regressions were conducted to examine the direct effects between childhood maltreatment and these outcomes while mediation analysis examined the indirect influence via Distress Tolerance. Results indicated that exposure to childhood maltreatment was associated with elevated odds of being in the symptomatic group across outcomes however the existence of an indirect relationship via Distress Tolerance was not supported. These findings indicate a lack of evidence that levels of Distress Tolerance may explain the onset of psychopathologies under investigation. Results and implications are discussed in relation to existing literature.

## **A Day in the Life....."Forensic psychological practice in secure settings: a view from the inside."**

Dr Clare Byrne, Forensic Psychologist, Department of Justice

Clare will speak about her role and the experience of working as a Psychologist within the criminal justice system.